

*****news release

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The Department of the Interior said today that four firms have submitted proposals for processing, promoting, and selling Alaska sealskins for the account of the United States Government.

Two other firms submitted proposals only for selling finished sealskins--the New York Auction Company, New York City, and Louis Denker, Inc., also New York City.

A comprehensive evaluation program is being undertaken to determine the relative quality of the sample sealskins submitted by firms seeking the processing contract. This is expected to be completed by mid-June and start of contract negotiations can be expected about July 1.

The fur seal herds of the Pribilof Islands, Alaska, are managed under the terms of a treaty to which Japan, Canada, the U.S.S.R., and the United States are parties. An amendment to this treaty was ratified April 10, extending its duration to 1969.

Through this agreement, the herd has increased to its present estimated size of 1,500,000 animals, from which a substantial annual harvest can be anticipated on a continuing basis. To the extent that the effectiveness of this program continues, the Department expects no interruption in the normal supply of Alaska sealskins, which will continue to be available to the luxury fur trade at the accustomed times.

The Department anticipates that a new contract, or contracts, for processing and selling Alaska sealskins for the Federal Government can be negotiated by midsummer.

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